

SOME weeks ago I heard a fanciful conversation between two Socialists who ascribed much of the Labour Party's troubles to Mr. Gaitskell's school career. It seemed that the present Hugh Gaitskell had had to sit on the horns of his fellow Wykehamites, Richard Crossman and I, and neither of them had ever fully recovered.

In fact, Richard Crossman was head of the school while young Gaitskell could only get his feet on the lower rungs of the prefectoral ladder. At both Winchester and Oxford, Gaitskell's career could be said to have developed "late developer."

Record Rise

The same phrase could not be applied to Hugh Gaitskell's parliamentary career. If he is elected leader of the Labour Party this week, he will have risen even faster than Bonar Law, the previous holder of the modern leadership record.

Bonar Law became leader exactly eleven years after he was first elected to the House. Mr. Gaitskell has been a Member for just ten years and five months.

Both men rose quickly because of their knowledge of economic matters, but there the similarity ends. Bonar Law was a compromise candidate, and Mr. Gaitskell is quite the reverse.

Williamsburgers

POLITICIANS are always said to be reluctant to give up the cares of office but I must say that I have rarely seen two more contented-looking men than Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Gaitskell as they sat in familiar conversation at the end of a Wednesday evening at Williamsburg, Award banqueting at the Drapers' Hall. Matching riband for riband, they appeared to flourish, as never before, in the truants' pleasures of retirement.

Some part of Sir Winston's pleasure may have been due to the exception of the two old "comrades, colleagues and friends" as he himself put it, who had come to do him honour. From the American side, General Gruenthal, Admiral Stark and Mr. Lewis Douglas, in particular, from our own, a galaxy beyond reckoning.

That Medallion

Sir Winston's speech, though not the portentous pronouncement for which some of his hearers were waiting, contained some fine examples of his most lapidary style.

My own favourite related to the idiosyncratic gold portrait-medallion of Sir Winston which Mr. Eisenberg recently designed with his own hand.

"I have not yet," the recipient was heard to say, "reached the conclusion of my correspondence with the President on this subject."

Where Power Resides

THERE is one name in the book trade, and only one, that makes all authors and publishers tremble. That is R. A. Last. The public has never heard of

Mr. Last and would not be particularly impressed to learn that he is manager of the book department of W. H. Smith and Son. Yet, in the last year or so he resides in Mr. Last's hands and in that world, "How many will Last take?" is the sixty-four-dollar question. For Smith's sell a decisive proportion of our daily reading.

Last Judgments

Fortunately Mr. Last, a small upright man in his early fifties, is both kindly and scrupulously just, and his judgment, particularly in the case of young and striving writers, errs as far towards the generous as his commercial sense and responsibilities allow.

But about 14,000 new books and 50,000 reprints cross his desk every

year, the heraldic designer who was responsible for the House of Commons Memorial Album.

Dedication in May

In the spring, the Books of Remembrance will be placed in position in the seven alcoves in which sculptors are now at work carving the seven regimental badges, and there is a proposal that after the cloisters are dedicated Mr. Last may place a day of each year a memorial tablet to a man of remembrance.

The total cost will, due to delays in obtaining a permit, be about £6,000 higher than the £22,000 originally estimated, and members and friends of the Household Cavalry will be asked to free the memorial fund before the dedication day. Of one thing they can be satisfied, the memorial will be worthy of the Brigade.

A Canadian to Watch

MR. WALTER HARRIS, Canada's Finance Minister, will arrive in London tomorrow on his way to the N.A.T.O. Finance Ministers' meeting in Paris.

Although practically unknown outside Canada, Mr. Harris is tipped as a possible successor to Mr. St. Laurent as Prime Minister. A non-smoker and non-drinker, he is a very young-looking fifty-one, an energetic speaker, a solid party man with a wide administrative experience. He entered the Cabinet only five years ago as Minister for Citizenship and Immigration and made his mark so quickly that he became a natural successor to Mr. Abbott, whom he succeeded as Finance Minister a year ago.

London's Artist

ONE of the late Hanslip Fletcher's closes: Friends was Professor A. E. Richardson, and last Wednesday the President of the Royal Academy, with the work of Hanslip Fletcher as his theme, fulminated genially before the London Society against the "hideous monstrosities" of modern architecture.

The friendship began in 1896, when the two men met at Birkbeck College, and they spent all their leisure hours exploring London. On Wednesday, Professor Richardson described how Hanslip Fletcher would plant himself firmly athwart the pavements of the town, sketching interminably and without any passing-by.

Readers of The Sunday Times between 1923-50 will remember with affection the weekly "Hanslip Fletcher," and Professor Richardson prophesied that in a hundred years' time writers and historians writing in their "recondite boxes would gratefully consult these meticulous records of London's past glories.

Ideal Prospero

SHAKESPEARE has already contributed a great deal to operatic history. Ambrose Thomas's Hamlet may not quite have stayed

the pace, but Othello, Falstaff, Macbeth, and Romeo have all jumped the orchestra pit with quite conspicuous success.

And now, I hear, Prospero is to do the rounds. Sir Michael, the Swiss composer whose "Gotha" recently had a deserved success in London, has completed an operatic version of "The Tempest." This is to be produced in Vienna next June, the first new opera to be given in the reconstructed Opera House.

Such a work by a composer, Marin's distinction would seem in any case to be marked down for London; but what makes it, in my view, a "must" for Covent Garden is the fact that the part of Prospero to be sung by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who is not only one of the most admired of living singers, but an eminent and lifelong Shakespearean with a particular passion for the fine management of words.

Lloyd George's Statue

THE Lloyd George Memorial Statue is likely to be erected on one of the two pedestals close to the Churchill Arch at the entrance to the House of Commons Chamber leading from the Members' Lobby, three are already occupied by the statues of Joseph Chamberlain and Harcourt.

is unanimous on this point. The final choice will give satisfaction to Sir Winston Churchill and to many others who feel that the memorial should be as near as possible to the Churchill Arch.

Mr. Lloyd George sat for fifty-five years and which he loved above all else.

Of the eight pedestals in the Members' Lobby, three are already occupied by the statues of Joseph Chamberlain and Harcourt.

Behind the Screens

A FINE battle is developing in the television audience research field. With the introduction of Independent Television, advertisers became vitally interested in

bleatings of Captain J. M. Rymer-Jones, the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. He is the most volatile admirer of police dogs I have ever met; his whole body seems to quiver with enthusiasm when describing the merits of these animals.

His admiration was first stimulated in Palestine where he saw a Doberman Pinscher track an Arab terrorist for twenty-two miles through a stony gully. The dog subdued his victim before dropping dead from exhaustion.

In London Captain Rymer-Jones has raised the number of dogs on



Rex III.

beat duty to 142, and my picture shows one of the stars of the team, Rex III, who recently made his eighth arrest a few days after being hurt in a tussle with a armed burglar.

Laugh? I thought

ONE would think it hardly possible to extract a ounce of humour from a crash-landing in the Atlantic, in the middle of the night, from 20,000 feet, but Trans-World Airlines think otherwise.

Passengers in their new Super-G talk: "Let's proceed to some entertainment," says the Pilot ... so you can take in the water-skiing as are fashionable in emergency landings. Yours is bright yellow and quite handsomely tailored ... Remove sharp objects such as pen-knives from your coat. Take off your glasses ... Remove your sunglasses ... Remove your tie ... Don't take off any other clothes. (You'll want to look your best when you land.)"

Radiant Regiment

THE Christmas advertisement of a Broadway haberdasher includes: "GENUINE BLACK WATCH TARTAN, ALSO IN BROWN AND RADIANT GREEN."